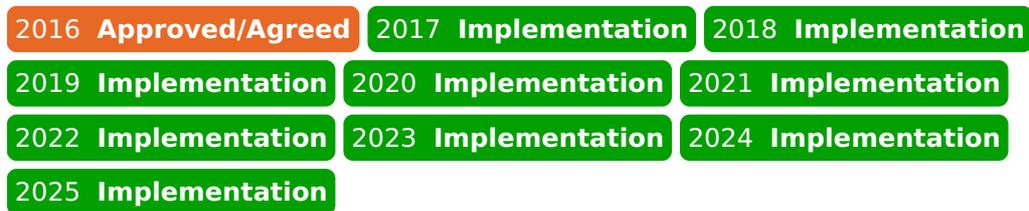


Revising approaches to teacher training and raising prestige of the teaching profession in VET



Timeline



ID number 28411

Background

Low prestige of the teaching profession has been a serious challenge in Latvia for years because of comparatively low salaries, overload and burn-out. The average age of VET teachers is above 50.

Therefore, raising the attractiveness of the profession, reducing burn-out risks, creating new approaches to teacher training and mechanisms for attracting young educators are needed to ensure committed, well qualified and innovation oriented teachers – supporters of VET reforms.

Almost 4 out of 10 teachers in Latvia think of leaving the profession in the next five years (OECD average 25%); every fourth at age 50 and younger (OECD average 14%). This situation has far-reaching consequences, including negative impact on implementation of training programmes and thus on learner achievements and learning environment. Immediate solutions are needed, including financial and organisational.

Systemic strategic approaches and practical measures are needed to ensure the training of highly qualified, competent and excellence-oriented teachers and trainers.

The 2019 government declaration committed to ‘restart’ the teacher training programmes, in order to raise the prestige of the teacher profession. This was an initiative of the Ministry of Education and Science, which called on the social partners jointly to address the issue of the lack of quality teachers and implement effective measures for providing funding for the provision of teaching staff.

Objectives

The national education strategy (guidelines) 2021-27, sets highly qualified, competent and excellence-oriented teachers a priority. The strategic aim is to revise approaches to teacher training and improve status and prestige of the teaching profession.

Description

Strengthening strategic approaches to the training of teachers:

- (a) annual identification of training needs for teachers based on evidence and using advanced teacher skills' assessment tools and methods;
- (b) targeted and needs-based planning of teacher training at municipal level, providing equivalent support facilities for all educators;
- (c) developing unified, coordinated and monitored VET by ensuring effective cooperation between stakeholders in teacher professional development;
- (d) support for innovative, research-based and diverse VET development activities and methodological support;
- (e) improving quality and effectiveness of teacher training solutions and assessment;
- (f) research-based pedagogical activities and professional development; providing a sufficiently targeted and regular methodical approach for the development of professional competences of teachers and academic staff;
- (g) strengthening the potential for professional cooperation – TALIS 2018 highlights that teachers professional cooperation, which includes greater interdependence between teachers, forms the basis for innovative and effective teaching. In Latvia 12% of teachers report on professional participation (in cooperation) at least once a month (OECD average of 21%);
- (h) ensuring a high-quality doctoral offer – quality of doctoral studies affects quality of education of teachers and academic staff;
- (i) ensuring regular professional development, methodological and consultative support through targeted coordination of the involvement and cooperation of stakeholders. Changing the focus on educational content and the functioning of educational institutions – support for teachers to be able to promote and follow each learner for growth, be able to apply pedagogical approaches and strategies in the classroom with learners representing different cultural, linguistic, social and economic contexts, be able to include learners with special needs, with efficient use of information and communication technologies, evaluating the performance of learners, engaging in learning content planning, ensuring cooperation with older pupils in support of learning, etc.;
- (j) enabling educators to react proactively to change in society and various unforeseen challenges in their work – in this respect continuously improving their professional skills and lifelong learning;
- (k) ongoing consultations and social dialogue on the reform for teachers' salaries.

2016 Approved/Agreed

In 2016, a new model was adopted for calculating teacher salaries. It considered their workload, extra duties, excellence, and, in the case of VET teachers, extra 20% to their monthly salary.

2017 Implementation

In 2017, ESF project 'Effective Management of Vocational Education Institutions and Improvement of Staff Competence' implemented practical support measures: continuous training and support rendered to teachers and administrative staff to improve their professional competence (including regular training courses and relevant skills' development), national and international mobilities, peer learning, company visits).

In 2017, the government prepared a plan to reform the structure and curricula of the teacher training system. According to the plan, teacher education programmes, composed of competence-based modules in accordance with the teacher occupational standards and the learning-outcomes approach, need to be created at all levels of higher education.

At EQF level 6, two options for obtaining a teacher qualification are to be developed:

- (a) an integrated professional bachelor's study programme for upper secondary education graduates;
- (b) a study programme for obtaining a professional teaching qualification after obtaining a bachelor degree in another field of study, which will be more specifically targeted at those aiming to become a vocational education teacher.

The plan was elaborated by a working group established by the education ministry, with participation of the Latvian Student Union, the Higher Education Council, the Foundation Possible Mission and sectoral experts. Implementation of the plan started at six higher education institutions.

2018 Implementation

In 2018, the government introduced a gradual increase in teachers' salaries until 2022. Regulations regarding teacher salaries were also amended in December, levelling salaries of heads of vocational schools with the salaries of heads of colleges. The reform was an important step towards making teacher remuneration more transparent and fairer, reducing salary differences that penalised teachers in smaller schools.

2019 Implementation

The teachers' gradual salary-increase continued. Minimal teacher-pay increased to EUR 750 per month compared to EUR 710 in 2018/19.

A new teacher education programme was developed by the education ministry in cooperation with the University of Latvia, the University of Liepaja, Daugavpils University and the Mission Possible Foundation. It is based on a careful selection of applicants, as well as simultaneous studies and actual work at school, at the same time receiving support from a mentor and practice manager. The new programme complements the transition to a competence-based approach in schools, also addressing the issue of the prestige and renewal of the teaching profession.

The experience, methodology and examples of good practice tested and applied by Mission Possible Foundation are used, involving people with a teaching aspiration and awareness of the importance of the learner-centred approach in education. Such a programme will allow for a gradual change in the teacher' education and training and provide a support mechanism throughout the system.

ESF project 'Effective Management of Vocational Education Institutions and Improvement of Staff Competence' involved more than 8 900 participants in its activities.

2020 Implementation

The minimal teacher salary was raised from EUR 790 to EUR 830 per month in 2020/21.

In January 2020, the government introduced a new teacher training programme, which envisages the entry of 100 new teachers into Latvian schools as of September 2020. Applicants already having higher education can apply for the programme and acquire pedagogical competence.

ESF project 'The effective management of vocational education institutions and the improvement of personnel competence' organised 69 in-company traineeships for vocational school teachers and trainers of which 48 were offered in Latvia (455 teachers and trainers participated) and 21 in other EU countries (198 teachers and trainers participated) which is a considerable amount in the national context.

In addition, four multiplier events were organised for 149 participants in different regions of Latvia to introduce VET teachers, WBL tutors, company representatives with individual approach/learning plans in WBL and their practical application.

School leaders and administration took part in courses and webinars promoting their stress management, public speech and emotional intelligence skills. Several courses and webinars were provided for digital competence improvement: including use of digital tools for distance learning and use of specific programmes.

Open Education Resources (OER) in the LV, LT, FI and EN languages were developed. The OERs aim at supporting the use of individual approaches by VET and workplace.

2021 Implementation

In 2021, the gradual teacher salary increase continued.

254 new teachers entered the Latvian education system: 156 (62%) graduates from 4-year bachelor study programmes and 98 (38%) from work-based 2-year study programmes. Work-based 2-year study programmes comprise 1-year of theoretical studies and 1-year work at school with the help of a mentor.

ESF project 'The effective management of vocational education institutions and the improvement of personnel competence' offered 13 in-company traineeships for vocational school teachers and trainers in Latvia (119 teachers and trainers participated).

Based on the results of a survey of VET teachers and school leaders, the new courses for digital competence of VET teachers and school administration were designed. Courses aimed to empower VET staff responsible for creating an effective learning environment, both face-to-face and online. 1 550 VET teachers and 220 school administration members took part in different courses: organising a high-quality online learning process, active learning and involvement methods for online teaching, interactive teaching materials and their use in the learning process, creating presentations for online lessons, using video tools and creating video materials when organising distance learning process, etiquette for virtual meetings. 15 heads of vocational education schools participated in the course Effective management: visual planning, organised for the administration of VET schools.

By the end of 2021, the project had 11 650 participants, of which 1 920 were school leaders and administration members.

2022 Implementation

In 2022, the gradual teacher salary increase continued.

In cooperation with stakeholders and social partners, the education ministry developed the action plan for filling teacher vacancies (2022-25).

39 new teachers entered in the system with the right to perform pedagogical activities and 116 teachers obtained additional qualifications for teaching another subject.

2023 Implementation

Latvia accepted the proposal to participate in Cedefop's European VET Teachers Survey (EVTS).

2024 Implementation

In 2024, amendments to the government regulation No 569 'Regulations on the education and professional qualifications required of teachers and the procedure for the development of teacher professional competence' were approved. They specified the training requirements for VET teachers, i.e. at least level 4 professional qualification and higher pedagogical education or completed professional competence development programme (3 ECTS or at least 72 hours), or a partly completed study programme related to pedagogy or teaching subjects.

The amendments also stipulate that VET teachers without a qualification in pedagogy

must complete the professional competence development programme during the academic year or must begin at least a short-cycle professional higher education study programme related to pedagogy or teaching subjects during the year. In this case, VET providers shall also offer at least one year of teacher mentor support.

In 2024, the framework agreement for the Swiss-Latvian cooperation programme was signed to reduce economic and social disparities within the EU. In October, the government also agreed on the implementation regulations of the programme in 2019-2029 focusing on developing the work-based learning in VET. The implementation of the programme started by designing a sector-based professional qualification model in mechanics, energy, agriculture and tourism sectors.

2025 Implementation

In 2025, two teacher training programmes (the result of the Erasmus+ programme project 'National coordinators for the implementation of the European agenda in adult learning in Latvia') – 'Practical pedagogy for working with adults' and 'Basics of pedagogy for working with adults' – were implemented by the University of Latvia and the Riga Technical University, with 178 attendees. The attendees received certificates of completing the professional competence development programme with rights to work as teachers in CVET.

Bodies responsible

- Higher Education Council
- Ministry of Education and Science
- Latvian Student Union
- University of Latvia
- Liepaja University
- Daugavpils University
- Academic Information Centre (AIC)
- Mission Possible Foundation
- State Education Development Agency (VIAA)

Target group

Education professionals

Teachers
Trainers
School leaders

Thematic categories

Teachers, trainers and school leaders competences

Systematic approaches to and opportunities for initial and continuous professional development of school leaders, teachers and trainers

Attractiveness of the teaching and training profession/career

European priorities in VET

VET Recommendation

VET as an attractive choice based on modern and digitalised provision of training and skills

Osnabrück Declaration

Establishing a new lifelong learning culture - relevance of continuing VET and digitalisation

Subsystem

IVET

Further reading

Regulations (No 569) on education and professional qualification required for teachers and the procedure for improving the professional competence of teachers, Cabinet of Ministers, 11 September 2018 (in Latvian)

Teacher salary regulations, Cabinet of Ministers, No 445, 5 July 2016

Related policy developments

2025 Implementation

Guidelines for the development of education: future skills for the future society 2021-27 (national education strategy)

There are four main areas of development envisaged in the national education strategy 2021-27:

Highly competent educators

 LATVIA

Type of development

Strategy/Action
plan

Subsystem

IVET CVET

“ ... ” Cite as

Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). Revising approaches to teacher training and raising prestige of the teaching profession in VET: Latvia. In Cedefop, & ReferNet. (2026). *Timeline of VET policies in Europe (2025 update)* [Online tool].

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/tools/timeline-vet-policies-europe/search/28411>